

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118881

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CB

SUBJECT: LON NON'S TRAVEL PLANS

REF: PHNOM PENH 7654 (NOT REPEATED PARIS)

1. LON NON CAME IN TO SEE STEARNS BEFORE DEPARTING FOR PARIS JUNE 5. HE STATED HIS INTENTION REMAIN IN FRANCE ABOUT ONE MONTH AFTER WHICH HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO RETURN TO PHNOM PENH AT LEAST FOR A VISIT. HE HAD PRESSING PERSONAL PROBLEMS, EVIDENTLY FINANCIAL ONES, WHICH HE SAID COULD ONLY BE RESOLVED BY A TRIP TO PHNOM PENH. FURTHERMORE, HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION AND WISHED TO OBTAIN FIRSTHAND READING FROM HIS BROTHER AND FROM HIS POLITICAL ASSOCIATES. HE PROFESSED TO UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF HIS RETURN ON AN ALREADY UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION BUT SAID HE COULD BE TRUSTED NOT TO AGGRAVATE HIS BROTHER'S PROBLEMS.

2. STEARNS SAID THAT WE CONTINUE TO BE DISTURBED BY SIGNS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UNREST IN PHNOM PENH, THE LATEST MANIFESTATION OF WHICH HAD BEEN THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION AND THE TRAGIC AFTERMATH. WE BELIEVED THAT LONG BORET WAS
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DOING AN EXCELLENT JOB BUT KHMER PROPENSITY FOR INTRIGUE

AND FACTIONALISM WAS CONSTANT THREAT TO GKR STABILITY.
IT SEEMED TO STEARNS THAT LON NON'S EARLY RETURN WOULD SERVE
TO FEED THE PHNOM PENH RUMOR MILLS AND, HOWEVER CORRECTLY HE

CONDUCTED HIMSELF, WOULD BE LIKELY TO ADD TO THE PROBLEMS
FROM AN EARLY RETURN TO PHNOM PENH. HE COUNSELED LON NON
TO WAIT UNTIL THE SITUATION WAS LESS TROUBLED.

3. LON NON REPEATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE DANGERS AND
COULD BE TRUSTED TO BEHAVE HIMSELF. HE STRESSED AGAIN THE
LENGTH OF HIS ABSENCE AND THE PERSONAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS
THAT HAD ARISEN BECAUSE OF IT.

4. STEARNS SAID THAT THE FINAL DECISION WOULD OF COURSE
HAVE TO BE LON NON'S. HE ASKED LON NON HOWEVER TO KEEP IN
CLOSE TOUCH WITH MARK PRATT AT OUR EMBASSY IN PARIS WHO
WOULD BE ABLE TO BRIEF HIM ON THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA AS
IT DEVELOPED. IF THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE REMAINED STORMY
STEARNS THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE FOR LON NON TO
RETURN TO WASHINGTON FROM PARIS IN JULY. THE DEFENSE DEPT
WAS PREPARED TO ARRANGE A SPECIAL COURSE IN LOGISTICS
MANAGEMENT ON SHORT NOTICE AND THIS WOULD BE A VALUABLE
PART OF LON NON'S AMERICAN TRAINING. STEARNS ASKED LON
NON TO CONSIDER THE MATTER CAREFULLY AND TO ADVISE US
THROUGH PRATT OF HIS INTENTIONS BEFORE MAKING ANY FIRM
DECISION TO RETURN TO PHNOM PENH. LON NON AGREED TO DO
THIS.

5. COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT LON NON WANTS TO
RETURN THIS SUMMER AND THAT OUR ADMONITIONS AND OFFERS
OF FURTHER TRAINING HAVE DIMINISHING INFLUENCE ON HIM.
AT THIS STAGE WE BELIEVE THAT NOTHING SHORT OF A CLEAR
MESSAGE FROM HIS BROTHER IS LIKELY TO DISSUADE LON NON
FROM VISITING PHNOM PENH IN JULY OR EARLY AUGUST.

6. FOR PARIS: PRATT SHOULD CONTACT LON NON THROUGH
KHMER EMBASSY PARIS AT EARLY OPPORTUNITY AND KEEP US
ADVISED OF HIS MOOD AND TRAVEL PLANS. KISSINGER

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